

(Lady Osler to Mrs. Chapin)

[Oxford] July 30th [1915]

Dear Sister

A year ago tonight We were in London before sailing - What a year!! - and What years there May be before us. No matter What happens I shall never live to see a normal life again. To me it is so awful not to be physically made uncomfortable by the war - And yet I dont know what to do. I am cutting down food all the time & it is difficult in this house on account of people coming - I have begun servants vacations by sending Ethel today thinking we should be alone - and behold 3 Canadian Soldiers have asked to come for the week End- Your letters come on Monday always and are such a pleasure - I wonder if you are expecting to go to the sea at all - I am sure you must all be in a state of anxiety about Germany's reply- I cant help feeling that Germany is doing her utmost to involve America - She knows that Europe will be crippled for years after the war is over and there will be America prosperous & untouched - You'll be in yet - I firmly believe. We hear that American Red + nurses are being called home - That reminds me that Mrs Dexter has sent another batch of Letters of her daughter from Lapanne - W.O has never looked at one or written her - nor have I. The girl has left Lapanne now - having had a bad throat - I think she is arranging to run the Nursing work at the Front in a Khaki uniform. Revere writes twice a week. They have many trials and tribulations - Are ready for patients now - perhaps have them - Harvard Hospital is next them. Revere sent for his bicycle as he has errands to do in the town when he cant always use the motor or Ambulance. I forwarded it through Harrod. It has been a trying time for the men - Campbell Howard particularly waiting & waiting. I saw a Medical Officer Saturday, just back from France - who said there were 30,000 Empty beds in France - British ones. Here in Oxford there are 700 - One Cannot understand it. Cliveden is full - & many Medical cases - W.O spends Every Monday there & intensely interesting Cases. The new wards are splendid - Phoebe And I went to Folkestone last Friday - We found it really a very attractive spot - far more so on the sea front than Paignton. The Hotel on a high Cliff. The Grand simply full of Canadians and 40,000 in Camp within a radius of seven miles - Hugh Osler & his wife in the Hotel - Hugh able to sleep there - a large portion of his Battalion sent over & he is kept to train new men coming over from Canada - Jack & his wife were there from the Camp in Yorkshire - Campbell came from Dover where he is training - & brought fellow officers to dine each night. Harry Wright was there and asked particularly for you - he is acting Sanitary Officer at a big camp - Then there was Ralph Osler back from the trenches - Charlie Bath - May Osborns boy & Allen Meredith - Really it nearly broke my heart to see them all - & so bright & Cheerful - Ellie Bowen had come for Sunday too, so we were a large party - Phoebe saw a hundred men she knew. We motored to all the Camps and had tea at Harry's Mess on Saturday. We stopped to see the Queen's Canadian Hospital where Phoebe goes - the additions there are splendid and they will soon be ready. Lady Markham has arranged a double room so Willie & I can stay there - or the Donald Armours. We also motored to Dover and Saw all the defenses - I longed for you. The Camps on the Downs are wonderful. There has been so much rain that Everything is vividly green & the masses of white tents & thousands of horses really wonderful. Phoebe & I Walked to the docks and poked about as much as we could- We saw sections of net - steel- that cross the Chammel and are held up by immense buoys. A number of submarines



have been caught in them undoubtedly. From Dover & Folkestone there is a regular roadway across to France for the ships - transports - Hospital Ships & passenger boats - protected on Either side by destroyers One could see them from the Cliff And from the Hotel Easily. At night there are lights on the destroyers or on some ships - changing Each night - some steady - some flashing - never twice alike. It is astounding to think of the amount of thought & ingenuity involved by Every branch of defense in this war. The young Osler wives near their husbands camps have taken a house at Hythe the next place to Folkestone - as they dislike the Hotel And want to stay over as long as their Men are in England. Their pluck and courage is amazing - & all the babies in Canada. Harry Wright is overjoyed for his wife is coming - Mr & Mrs Blake are bringing her over And I fancy they will take a house near there somewhere - Phoebe and I left Monday morning and came home through London - glad as usual to get back here - On our return we found a most worrying wire about Norman - Who has blood poison from a p.m. Pricked his finger - His own Hospital at Wimereux was ready to move so they took him at once into Boulogne. The General in Chief was Called in And W.O has been hearing from him Each day - His temp is now down, and he is doing well - Bill has also been to see him & wired he was better - but Evidently he has had a close shave - & will be much upset I know for he was very downhearted before - Campbell you should see - he looks such a beauty in his uniform - His friends seem devoted to him. I had really quite a holiday from work - but have been at it hard today - We have made 150 sets of pyjamas for Somerville - Yesterday afternoon I took Nurses in the Car to Ewelme & had tea - also arranged the rooms for our young Magdalen friend Mr Langstaff who has gone there to stay. The Ramsay Wrights are just back from a visit in S. Devon & feeling much better. Dr Camac is working in the Paignton Hospital for a little while, some of the men are away - he may go to Lapenne. Archie has a household of officers at the Guests place in Rutlandshire - nervous cases - very trying & worrying. I saw Cora in London Monday & she has asked us to come whenever we can to Hougaton as she will be there alone - And can only use three bed rooms, so officers are quartered in her house and 150 men in her stables. I do not mean to go away except for 24 hours. W.O says he shall go to France as soon as they have medical Cases at McGill & be gone a month. Marion has just called me up. Bob is busy & delighted. Mrs Van Buren is wonderfully well - Bess at St Moritz. The Januarys staying at Hamble - Mrs Somerville still working with her Scots & wild about them. She was horrified at having two come [in?] roaring drunk the other afternoon after they had their furlough papers & pay. I think you better send this to Sallie for I cant write another long letter. The shoes & stockings are a comfort. I am putting the £3 into found [a fund?] for a Canadian prisoner in Germany - I have one already - Ted Bath, Ruth Bath's son, tell Ruth Coxe. I can send him food and Tobacco - & Lady Drummond is sending me another man. The parcels go free by post And must be such a comfort - the mere getting them bringing variety into their lives. Ted Bath has one English Officer with him - 400 Russians & 200 French - The Garden is lovely - Phoebe takes large baskets each morning to Doris & Phyllis. Benning has gone to the Dardanelles, William still at Headington - Enoch in Balliol - & training in the Park - W.O is hopeless about a Secretary - I try to help but he wont let me - In my absence he filled your bed & floor with books And the top of all the Shelves in the Sitting room.

I am afraid you can never read this long letter. Phoebe looks perfectly beautiful -

Much - much love -

Affly

Grace.